

Refreshment

The Ministry of Refreshment

In the papyri, the term ANAPAUO is found as “an agricultural term, e.g., of giving land rest by sowing light crops upon it. In inscriptions it is found on gravestones of Christians, followed by the date of death (Moulton and Milligan).”

Romans 15:32 says, “So that by God’s will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed.” And here, Paul implies that true refreshment comes from one saint to another as they enjoy each other’s company.

In I Corinthians 16: 17,18, Paul cites by name three spiritually mature believers whose company, virtue-love and faith recently ‘refreshed’ his soul. And the ramification is that believers occasionally require ‘refreshment.’ “I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.”

Our Lord used the term in Matthew 11:28, where the connotation is to give rest from effort: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” And this is a remarkable statement – that there is refreshment and rest in this Person only; only here may true ease be discovered.

Paul will again use the term in Philemon 20, which says, “I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.” And the inference here is that Philemon’s grace attitude, faith in God, trust in God’s promises, virtue-love, and *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* (method of operation and manner of life) are all images and expressions of love for Christ, and the character of Christ being expressed in Philemon, so that by associating with Philemon, Paul experiences the same refreshment that he would have found with Christ Himself. This verse details the importance, then, of growing to spiritual maturity and of associating with such mature believers.

In II Corinthians 7:13, Paul confirms that the spir-

its of believers are ‘refreshed’ by other believers. “By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.”

Physical refreshment is found through sleep and physical rest, according to Matthew 26:45, which states, “Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.’”

This need for physical rest is also stated in Mark 6:31 and Mark 14:41. And Luke 12:19 asserts that food, drink, sleep and recreation are all forms of physical refreshment, and that they are legitimate as long as they do not take priority over God and knowledge of His Word. “And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’”

I Peter 4:14 uses the term ANAPAUO for the rest/refreshment that belongs to the saint/believer that suffers for the name of Christ. This is indeed an extraordinary statement, that spiritual ‘refreshment’ may be found in suffering and persecution. Only the very, very spiritually mature believer could produce this type of attitude and happiness – more and more happiness and rest found in more and more suffering for Christ. “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

In Revelation 6:11 dwells an unique insinuation: that the ‘righteous indignation,’ or ‘righteous demand for vengeance from the Perfect Justice of God’ by the martyred saints of the Tribulation, can only find rest/refreshment in the Perfect Righteousness and Faithfulness of God. “Then each of them (the martyred saints) was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer (rest), until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.”

And Hebrews 4:3,4 and Revelation 14:11 states that

those who reject Christ will never know any type of rest/refreshment in the Lake of Fire for all eternity. “And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name.”

In contrast, Revelation 14:13 states that those who accept Christ will ‘rest’ forever and ever. “Then I heard a voice from heaven, say, ‘Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.’